



Director's Report to the Commission December 11-12, 2015

Wildlife Program

Wolf Conservation and Management

Capture and Monitoring Update

- On November 24, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) confirmed a new wolf pack, the Loup Loup pack, near the towns of Twisp and Omak in Okanogan County. Following up on a cluster of public wolf sightings in north-central Washington, the Department, working in coordination with the U.S. Department Agriculture's Wildlife Services and the Service, identified a group of wolves previously undocumented in the area. Further investigation, including ground surveys, confirmed the presence and consistent use of the area by multiple wolves. The Department and partner agencies will continue to monitor the new group over the winter and will attempt to capture and fit one of the wolves with a radio collar in summer 2016. The gray wolf is federally listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and the Service is the primary agency responsible for managing wolves in the western two-thirds of Washington, including the area where the new pack was confirmed. Wolves are listed statewide as endangered by the state of Washington.
- The Spokane Tribe of Indians reported a legal harvest of a gray wolf on the Spokane Indian Reservation.

Depredations and Conflict Management Update

- Department personnel staffed a booth at the Washington Cattlemen's Association convention from November 11-14, and presented an update on Wolf Conservation and Management in Washington.

Wolf Advisory Group Update

- On November 6, the Department and the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) had a conference call (open to the public on a muted line) to discuss Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock (DPCA-L). WAG will continue their review the DPCA-L during the December meeting and will provide recommendations to the Department on prioritizing areas, efficacy of preventive measures, and performance measures for future DPCA-L.

- On November 11, Department staff and WAG toured a domestic sheep allotment in the Teanaway pack area. The objective of the tour was to walk-the-land and discuss preventive measures so members have a greater depth of understanding about balancing landscape challenges with high-quality preventive measures prior to the December WAG meeting. The tour was open to the public.
- The Interagency Wolf Committee met on November 18 in Tumwater. The group discussed recent activities associated with capture and monitoring, conflict prevention, wolf-livestock depredations, coordination between the members, and data sharing. During the last portion of the meeting, members from WAG joined to hear presentations from the Department, the Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Forest Service on grazing plans and operations. The meeting was open to the public.
- The next WAG meeting is December 13-14 and will take place in Spokane Valley. It will feature a presentation by Shane Mahoney (University of Newfoundland and Labrador), Rob McCoy (Makah Tribe), and Dan McKinley (Mule Deer Foundation) on “perspectives from the hunting community.” All WAG events are open to the public.

Enforcement Program

Initiative 1401 Planning and Decision Package

Initiative 1401 (I-1401) passed with overwhelming support from Washington voters last month. Chief Crown met with Office of Financial Management (OFM) representatives on November 4, right after the initiative passed, to discuss funding options due to the new enforcement responsibilities of Department Enforcement over non-native, exotic animal parts and products. OFM recommended that the Department submit a decision package for the upcoming 2016 Legislative Session to request funding support as a result of the expanded responsibilities under I-1401. Enforcement’s proposal prioritizes funding support for a working group to identify the best way to solve this complex issue, initial force training for new requirements, and initial position funding to assist with implementing the new prohibitions and scoping the problem within Washington State borders. The Department is continuing to work closely with OFM and the Governor’s budget analysts to prepare the final proposal.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Annual Audit of Washington State’s Sanitary Shellfish Program

The FDA is currently conducting its annual audit of Washington State’s Sanitary Shellfish Program. As the primary enforcer of Department of Health’s criminal shellfish laws, the Department is responsible for patrolling growing areas with unsanitary conditions. The FDA will assess whether the Department met the mandated patrol

frequency based on a public health risk model and Department Enforcement provides an annual report for the audit. The report includes staffing and equipment updates, significant accomplishments, and a break-down of officer activity associated with patrolling harvest areas.

NOAA Joint Enforcement Agreement

The Enforcement Program has a joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) with NOAA Office for Law Enforcement that brings close to \$1 million a year to the program to support equipment and staff positions for the protection of federally managed resources. The program just completed a JEA cycle and NOAA leadership is pleased with the results. Focus areas included Endangered Species Act listed species, along with coastal groundfish and salmon fisheries. The program has entered into a new agreement with similar funding levels.

Fish Program

Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan (CSFP)

The Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy adopted by the Commission in 2009 outlines strategies to align hatcheries and fisheries with wild salmon and steelhead conservation, including recommendations from the Hatchery and Scientific Review Group (HSRG). The CSFP is the implementation of that policy in the lower Columbia River. The plan has been in the works since about 2009, when initial hatchery reform measures began in the region, including reduced or redirected hatchery program sizes and initial discussions regarding alternative commercial fishing gear.

The CSFP describes the relationship to the Lower Columbia River Recovery Plan, summarizes recovery objectives, discusses hatchery and harvest reform actions and provides detailed information about actions that have been taken or are planned to be taken towards meeting the objectives of the Commission policy and overall guidance from NOAA Fisheries for salmon and steelhead recovery. Specific actions include: integrating hatchery and wild fish in the broodstock, designation of wild steelhead gene banks, implementing weirs to control hatchery fish on the spawning ground, reduced hatchery programs, improved hatchery infrastructure, and increased emphasis on mark-selective sport and commercial fisheries.

In cooperation with the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, the plan is being provided for public comment with the goal of a final document in spring/summer of 2016.

“The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB) and WDFW have utilized guidance and information provided in the Washington Recovery Plan, HSRG reviews and findings, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Columbia River Basin Hatchery

Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and relevant WFWC policies to develop a CSF Plan that will:

- Support efforts to return natural origin lower Columbia salmon and steelhead to healthy, harvestable levels ; and
- Sustain important fisheries.” (Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries Plan 12/04/15 draft)